



# Glenisk's Commitment To Organics Bears Fruit As The Market Grows

By Gearoid Keegan

**THE growing importance of the organic market was underlined by An Taoiseach, Brian Cowen TD, in his address last Monday in Killeigh.**

He stated that Glenisk is well known - and much appreciated - for its extensive range of organic yogurt, milks, yogurt desserts and goats milk products.

'The largest organic dairy in Ireland, it has come a long way in a relatively short space of time. In its first year of organic production, back in 1995, the company produced half a million pots of yogurt. Thirteen years later, it is taking in 90% of the organic milk in Ireland and producing half a million pots of yogurt every week,' he said.

Glenisk was an early pioneer of organic food. 'Their pioneering zeal is

clearly as strong today as the day they first got started in the business. It shows in all sorts of ways. In their appetite for new products. In their interest in developing partnerships with like-minded organisations. In their proactive promotion of the benefits of organic food. And in their constant search for ways of reducing the environmental impact of their operation. I do not think anyone could doubt the continuing strength of Glenisk's passion for organics - and for good food,' said the Taoiseach. He pointed out that the Government was committed to expanding the organic industry in Ireland.

'The expansion of this plant was made possible thanks to Glenisk's own innovation and resources and also to grant - aid from the Dairy Investment Fund. Tanaiste Mary Coughlan announced the Fund in 2006; and as Minister for Finance at the

time, I was pleased to approve capital expenditure of ?114 million in it. The Fund was targeted in particular at the efficient production of core and value-added products and Glenisk was a perfect fit,' Mr Cowen outlined.

The organic sector in Ireland is still very small. At the end of 2007, there were just over 1,330 organic operators in Ireland. Less than 1% of the total land area is being farmed organically.

At the same time, the Irish organic retail market is expected to grow to ?400m by 2012 and, of course, EU-wide, the demand for organic food is increasing.

'Given that the majority of organic food sold in Ireland is currently imported, there are clearly opportunities out there,' said Mr Cowen.

'The Programme for Government has a target of 5% of land area in organic

production by 2012. This will obviously be quite a challenge but the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and the Government, are determined to get there,' he went on, noting that the Department recently launched its Organic Farming Action Plan 2008-2012.

'Substantial financial supports are available through the Department. Organic farmers can join the Organic Farming Scheme and be paid on a per hectare basis at very attractive rates. So the potential is there, the plan is there and the incentives are in place,' Mr Cowen declared.

Last year, Glenisk received a Bord Bia "Food Oscar", winning the "Making a Difference" category at the Bord Bia Food & Drink Industry Awards.



*The tape is cut to open the new Glenisk Factory at Newtown, Killeigh.  
Vincent Cleary, Cllr. Barry Cowen, Chairman of Offaly Co. Council; Charles Flanagan TD. John Maloney TD, Minister of State;  
Tony Keohan, CEO Tesco; an Taoiseach Brian Cowen TD. Mary Cleray, Jack Cleary, Ger Cleary,*



*The new Glenisk Factory at Newtown, Killeigh.*